

XXXV.—On some rare or unfigured Eggs of Palearctic Birds.

By H. E. DRESSER, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., &c.*

(Plate XI.)

LANIUS CRISTATUS. Brown Red-tailed Shrike. (Pl. XI. figs. 6, 9.)

(Dresser, Man. Palearct. Birds, p. 240.)

This Shrike inhabits Eastern Asia, and breeds in Dauria, where the eggs now figured were obtained by Dr. Dybowski. It arrives in Dauria late in May, and commences nidification about the middle of June. The nest is placed in a bush or in the branches of a fallen tree about $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres above the ground. The eggs resemble some varieties of *Lanius collurio*, but are smaller and, as a rule, paler, with fewer and smaller markings. In size they measure about 0·85 by 0·64 inch.

LANIUS BUCEPHALUS. Bull-headed Shrike. (Pl. XI. figs. 10, 11, 12.)

(Dresser, Man. Palearct. Birds, p. 242.)

The only country from which I have seen the eggs of this Shrike is Japan, where the bird breeds not uncommonly, placing its nest in thorny bushes, from about four to ten feet from the ground. The eggs now figured are out of two clutches, one of which was taken from a nest placed in a *Cryptomeria* on Fuji, about ten feet above the ground, and the other on a Shikimi tree near Tokyo, six feet above the ground. The eggs vary a good deal, some being pale whitish with small and somewhat pale markings, whereas others have a darker background and are boldly and more darkly blotched. Those in my collection measure about 0·95 by 0·73 inch.

LANIUS RADDII. Radde's Grey Shrike. (Pl. XI. figs. 1, 2, 3.)

(Dresser, Man. Palearct. Birds, p. 244.)

Mr. Zarudny was the first to discover the nest of this rare Shrike on his last expedition to Persia, and kindly sent me four eggs, which are, I believe, the only authentic specimens

* Continued from 'Ibis,' 1904, p. 489.

yet known. He writes to me as follows:—"These eggs were taken on the 13/25 May at Keróo, in the province of Gilyan, North Persia. The nest was placed in a barberry-bush (*Berberis densiflora*) which grew on the bank of a small mountain-stream, and was about four feet above the ground. It was firmly and compactly built, the outermost wall of loose juniper-twigs, the prickly branches of the barberry, and prickly leaves of various plants; the next layer, or middle wall, was of narrow or wider juniper-ends, mixed with grass-stems; and the inner wall or lining was composed of fine rootlets, sheep's wool, and goat's hair. Along the edges of the outer wall filaments of grass-leaves and stout grass-straws were laid in such a manner as to form a regular pentagon, and in some parts of the outside the nest was decorated with pieces of cotton-wool and sheep's wool. The measurements of the nest were as follows:—Total height 85 mm. (3.35 inches), depth 60 (2.36), outside diameter 125 (4.92), diameter of cup 68 (2.68)." The average size of the four eggs is 0.9 by 0.7 inch.

LANIUS ERYTHRONOTUS. Rufous-backed Shrike. (Pl. XI. figs. 5, 8.)

(Dresser, Man. Palæarct. Birds, p. 245.)

The breeding-range of this Shrike extends from Turkestan down into India. The bird breeds from March to August, according to the locality, and Major Wardlaw Ramsay found many nests in Afghanistan in May and June. These he describes as being composed of green grass, moss, cotton-wool, thistledown, rags, cow's hair, mule's hair, and shreds of juniper-bark, &c.; they were placed in willows by the river-bank, in apricot-trees, and in one instance in the centre of a dense thorny creeper. The two eggs figured are from the same clutch, to shew the variation. Eggs in my collection vary in size from 0.87 by 0.67 to 0.92 by 0.72 inch.

LANIUS RUFUS O.-Grant, nec Gmel. Eastern Woodchat-Shrike. (Pl. XI. figs. 4, 7.)

This subspecies, which was differentiated by Mr. Ogilvie-

Grant (Nov. Zool. ix. p. 464), is an eastern form of our common Woodchat-Shrike, differing in having the basal portion of the middle tail-feathers white. It was found by Mr. Zarudny breeding in Arabistan, Persia, in March 1904; he obtained four clutches of its eggs, all of which he sent to me. The eggs differ but little *inter se*, and, as was to be expected, are barely separable from those of the Western Woodchat (*Lanius auriculatus*); for subspecies, so far as my experience goes, lay eggs which do not differ from those of the typical species; nor does this subspecies differ in the nest or mode of nidification. The dimensions of eggs of three clutches average 0.89 by 0.68 inch.

I am doubtful whether *rufus* is the correct specific name for this Eastern form of the Woodchat-Shrike, for *Lanius rufus* of Brisson (Orn. ii. p. 147) and Kaup (Natürl. Syst. p. 33) are both referable to our European Woodchat, whereas *L. rufus* of Gmelin is in point of fact quite a different bird. But I hold that Mr. Ogilvie-Grant (Nov. Zool. ix. p. 470) was in error when he discarded *Lanius auriculatus* of Müller (including it doubtfully among the synonymy of *Lanius minor*) in favour of *pomeranus* of Sparrman*.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XI.

	Eggs of
Figs. 1, 2, 3.	<i>Lanius raddii</i> , p. 525.
„ 4, 7.	<i>Lanius rufus</i> , p. 526.
„ 5, 8.	<i>Lanius erythronotus</i> , p. 526.
„ 6, 9.	<i>Lanius cristatus</i> , p. 525.
„ 10, 11, 12.	<i>Lanius bucephalus</i> , p. 525.

* [It is possible that Mr. Ogilvie-Grant may have been wrong in suggesting that the term "*auriculatus*" may belong to *Lanius minor*. But we agree with Mr. Saunders ('Ibis,' 1883, p. 83) in adopting "*pomeranus*" of Sparrman as the first *certain* specific name for the Woodchat, and employed as such in the B. O. U. List.—EDD.]



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EGGS OF PALÆARCTIC SHRIKES.